

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-3, 6-12, 15-26 and 46 are pending in the application and stand rejected. Claims 9, 10, 12, and 22-24 are objected to as depending from a rejected claim, but are otherwise considered allowable. Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11, 15-21, 25, 26 and 46 stand rejected, variously, under 35 U.S.C. §102, §103 and §112, second paragraph. The specific grounds for rejection, and applicants' response thereto, are set out in detail below.

II. Interview

Applicants wish to thank the examiner and his supervisor for the courtesy of a telephonic interview conducted on February 23, 2007, during which the examiner clarified that U.S. Patent 6,214,613 ("the '613 patent") is not prior art against the instant application, as applicants asserted in their response filed on July 11, 2005. Thus, the rejections based on the '613 patent under §102(e) and §103 were said to be withdrawn, and are not therefore addressed further in this response.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 6, 7, 16, 17 and 26 stand rejected as indefinite under the second paragraph of §112. As suggested by the examiner, claims 16 and 17 have been canceled, thereby addressing the alleged duplication with claims 6 and 7, respectively. In addition, the typographical error in claim 26 has been corrected. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions relating to this case, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned applicants' representative at (512) 536-3184.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven L. Highlander
Reg. No. 37,642
Attorney for Applicants

FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI L.L.P.
600 Congress Avenue, Suite 2400
Austin, Texas 78701
512.536.3184 (voice)
512.536.4598 (fax)

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